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8 September 1966

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## INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

VIET CONG ANTIELECTION ACTIVITY IN SOUTH VIETNAM

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

ARMY review(s) completed.

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
Directorate of Intelligence  
8 September 1966

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Viet Cong Antielection Activity in South Vietnam

Summary

The Communist effort to sabotage South Vietnam's 11 September election of delegates to a National Constituent Assembly continues unabated. Although there have been serious bombing incidents in the cities of Saigon and Hue, most of the Viet Cong activity consists of relatively small-scale harassment of the rural population. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Viet Cong plans for fairly elaborate antielection efforts. The question now is whether the Communists will be able to implement their plans in view of GVN preparations to scotch any large-scale effort to interfere with the electoral process this Sunday.

Viet Cong and Buddhist efforts to interfere with the election appear to be proceeding along independent lines. There have been only a few recent reports of attempts by the Viet Cong to enlist Buddhist aid or to coordinate their campaign with that of the more militant religious leaders. The Viet Cong may have been able to conceal many of their efforts to unite with the Buddhists. There are indications, however, that the Buddhists generally reject any association with Communists in their opposition to the GVN-sponsored election.

The National Liberation Front and Hanoi continue their antielection radiobroadcasts to the people of the South. The Viet Cong station in at least one broadcast threatened armed violence against the election, but in the main the Communist radio denunciations have been stated in more or less standard terms.

Note: This memorandum has been produced solely by CIA. It was prepared by the Office of Current Intelligence.

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General Situation

1. There is no apparent letup in Communist efforts to disrupt South Vietnam's 11 September election of delegates to the National Constituent Assembly. With balloting due to begin in about 72 hours,

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[redacted] a pattern of feverish planning by the Communists to interfere with the election; as well as extensive propaganda and harassing activity at the rice-roots level throughout the country. Most Viet Cong antielection activity has been in rural areas, with relatively few incidents recorded in urban areas.

2. No significant turn in Communist tactics to disrupt the election has become evident during the past week. [redacted] continues to raise the possibility of stepped-up Communist military activity in various parts of the country as part of general planning to sabotage the elections. However, no [redacted] firm indications of preparation for such military actions have been received.

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3. Denunciations of the election by both Radio Hanoi and the Viet Cong's Liberation Radio are increasing. Hanoi's transmissions to the South, which occur several times a day, give consistent treatment to the elections. In the South, Liberation Radio denounces the elections during each of its broadcast periods, with at least one lengthy commentary in addition to other items relating to the election.

4. On the basis of reporting received to date, it appears that the Viet Cong effort to sabotage the election will be essentially low key. In the few remaining days before the election, an increasing amount of low-level harassment activity, which has been the pattern so far, is likely, punctuated by some more spectacular military-terroristic acts directed against polling places, and possibly against candidates and officials. Despite the many reports of Communist intentions to assassinate or kidnap candidates, officials, and election workers, there has been very little of this type of antielection activity. Direct strikes against candidates and others may, of course, occur on election day, or immediately afterward. The former course of action could disrupt the electoral process, while the latter could confuse the legal basis of the assembly itself.

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5. Communist antielection plans and activities in each of the corps zones are discussed below:

I Corps Tactical Zone

6. Reports continue to filter in from I Corps about Communist plans for increased military activity against lines of communication and government and US troop installations. Quang Nam Province, [REDACTED] appears to be the focus of the intended military effort. The reports relate Viet Cong efforts to muster armed forces roughly along a line stretching from Hoi An to Da Nang to Hoa Vang. Forces along this line are supposed to number about 1,000 men. At least one main-force battalion--the R/70--has been identified as a part of this force. The mission of the troops is to interdict Route 1, harass ARVN and US units, and possibly attack installations. Another main-force battalion--the R/20, located in Duy Xuyen district, southwest of Da Nang--is to engage in antielection activities, including assassination, propaganda, and military harassing missions. In Quang Tin Province, the Viet Cong are reported to be planning to take and hold briefly the province capital of Tam Ky. While possessing the capability to overrun Tam Ky temporarily, the Communists are considered unlikely to adopt this course of action.

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7. Although there are numerous reports from I Corps concerning Communist harassment and propagandizing of the electorate, serious antielection incidents have been few in number. However, on 6 September, according to press reports, a grenade thrown into a Hue police station where local election officials were gathered to discuss election plans injured 26 persons.

8. Also in Hue, four sabotage cells are reported to have been formed to disrupt the elections. These teams are supposed to assassinate several candidates, three of whom are members of the Dai Viet party.

9. In Quang Tin, the Viet Cong reportedly plan to flood the polls with people from Communist-controlled areas in order to disrupt the election process. This device, which has been reported from several provinces throughout the country, apparently is viewed as a highly effective tactic by the Viet Cong.

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10. In Quang Ngai Province, the Viet Cong have included in their antielection plans the destruction of the province capital's electric generating plant. Also in this province they propose to incite Buddhist demonstrations.

## II Corps Tactical Zone

11. Reports from the various provinces of II Corps indicate that the Communist antielection effort is intensifying. Word of secret planning activities suggests that in the days just before the election, and on election day, there will be an upsurge in Viet Cong harassment, interdiction of lines of communication, as well as attacks against candidates, officials, and polling places. To date, however, there has been no such upsurge.

12. The Viet Cong continue to seize voter identification cards or personal ID documents. In Binh Dinh Province, the Communists are said to be buying voter identity cards. These cards can be used by the Communists to vote and, when properly validated thereby, can be used for infiltration into and residency in government-controlled areas.

13. In Binh Thuan Province, Viet Cong cadres have reportedly been urged to merge with and participate in Buddhist antigovernment and antielection demonstrations in Phan Thiet, the capital. This is another of several reports from scattered areas of the nation alleging that Buddhist antigovernment activities are to be a cloak to conceal and advance Viet Cong antielection efforts.

14. In the highland province of Kontum, Viet Cong - oriented montagnards plan to disrupt the election following a plan roughly similar to those in other areas of the country. Propaganda campaigns against the election, seizure of voter and personal documents, interdiction of roads to polling places, and general military actions against GVN installations--including polling places--are all part of the montagnard plan. Propaganda lectures against the elections have also been reported from Darlac Province.

15. Kidnapings, sometimes on a large scale, seem to be a part of most of the counterelection plans of the

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Communists. At Binh Thuan, in Phu Yen Province, officials are to be the main targets of abduction. In Khanh Hoa, a local Viet Cong plan calls for kidnaping 200 persons from several villages located in the central part of the province on election day. These persons will be forced to attend an indoctrination course and then be released--presumably too late to vote.

### III Corps Tactical Zone

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The capital area has been rocked by several terrorist actions clearly connected with counterelection efforts.

17. On 2 September, the Communists destroyed a polling office in Binh Duong Province, some 27 miles north of Saigon. In Cholon, the Chinese quarter of Saigon, a grenade was thrown on 6 September into a political campaign vehicle. Two other election-associated incidents were the bombing of a candidate's home on 6 September and a daring daylight strike on an election information center at the edge of Saigon near Tan San Nhut airport.

18. The incidents in Saigon are probably part of an antielection program for the capital area outlined in a recently captured top-secret document of the Communist Saigon - Cholon - Gia Dinh Special Sector Current Affairs Committee. The directive, prepared on orders of the Viet Cong Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN), is probably typical of those received by party organs throughout the country. The singular feature of this plan, as compared with those reported from other parts of South Vietnam, is that it calls for cessation of military-terroristic activity by the morning of 11 September. The document suggests some feeling among the Viet Cong that violence continued into the voting period itself may be counterproductive. On election day, the only Viet Cong antielection activity ordered by the directive for the Saigon area is propaganda urging the people not to vote.

19. A recent estimate prepared by MACV of enemy military and paramilitary resources in the

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Saigon area states that there are from 2,700 to 3,200 persons who might be assigned antielection military tasks. Approximately 1,400 cadres and some 1,250 sympathizers are also estimated to be available in the Saigon area.

20. In Long An Province, the Viet Cong continue to press their efforts to close lines of communications to polling places. The Viet Cong have also forbidden people to leave their hamlets and villages during a period before and after election day.

#### IV Corps Tactical Zone

21. Many of the reported Viet Cong plans to disrupt the elections in IV Corps call for military actions directed against polling places and ARVN installations. Low-level harassment of the electorate appears to be widespread in the delta region.

22. In Kien Hoa Province, on 31 August, election campaigners were harassed by Viet Cong rifle fire. This incident may be the first one in which candidates were subjected to direct attack while conducting their election campaigns.

23. In Dinh Tuong Province, the Viet Cong have endeavored to interest Buddhist leaders in their antielection activities--so far without any apparent success. Also in this province, the Catholic population, which resides mostly in unsecured areas, has been subject to intimidation by the Viet Cong in the course of their antielection efforts. Viet Cong district forces in the central parts of the province have been ordered to hang banners and posters in the district capital and to mortar the district office. Three main-force Viet Cong battalions in Dinh Tuong have been ordered to perform several unspecified military tasks in support of the counterelection campaign. These units,

are supposed to be supported by two companies of artillery which have recently arrived in the delta region from North Vietnam.

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